Sketches
of the
Moravian Missions
in the Northern Parts
of
North America
also in the
West Indies, South Africa, South America
and Russian Asia.

Collected from the Panoplist & Records
for the Society of Inquiry respecting
Missions
of the
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Sketches

On examining the Reports presented to this Society at former meetings, I find three upon the Moravian Missions. Among these are Greenland and Labrador, places which are comprehended in the limits assigned for this, and where the missions of any note within the compass of recent accounts are established. With regard to these it is unnecessary to give any further information at this time, than their existing circumstances as stated in their last accounts.

Greenland. In Greenland, it is stated, that the walk and conversation of the christian afford joy to the Brethren. Although the seasons have been unfavorable which have rendered their circumstances truly distressing, yet they feel to rejoice. "The word of the cross", says one of their missionaries, "approves itself to be the power of God to our congregation.

I am astonished to see with what diligence they attend at the chapels, notwithstanding the severity of the weather. So eager are they that even the children come into the halls and passages half an hour before the time, that they may not miss of hearing the bell. I asked a child of five years old whether it was not too cold to go to church. "No", was his answer. "But it freezes very hard." "Yes, but when I attend to what is said of Jesus my Saviour, I am no longer aware that it freezes."

In this mission one circumstance must not pass unnoticed; that amidst death in almost every form, there was not a single death among the European Brethren during the first thirty years of the mission. And in this connection it may be remarked further, that there is not to be found recorded the death of a missionary by violence, in the whole extent of the Moravian Mission, though conversant with savage nature in all its variety. Their Brother Mentzel died Oct 31 1816 having spent thirty three years in the service of the Greeland mission.

The inhabitants of the three settlements in Greenland amounted in 1815 to 1,110 baptised persons, which is more than one tenth of the whole number of the Greenland inhabitants.

Labrador. From Hopedale in Labrador we collect the following information. "The work of the Lord prospers in that place particularly among the young. The number of inhabitants about 135; of whom 107 are baptised & 44 are communicants. The vessel which usually visits Labrador to carry supplies was prevented from reaching Hopedale in 1815 by the ice and furious storms, for the first time in fifty three years. Their venerable brother Anderson died Feb 28. 1816 having served this mission above forty years with exemplary faithfulness. Several parts of the New testament have been translated into the Esquimaux language.

In Nain, another station in Labrador we are informed that the mission prospers. Their schools are blessed particularly to the

adults. A new church has been erected. The number who dwells in this settlement is about 166, of whom 129 belong to the congregation. One of the aged brethren is diligently employed in translating the epistles.

The accounts from the third station in Labrador which is at Okkak are pleasing. The preaching of the gospel has been attended with spirit & power. Several have awakened to the knowledge of themselves as sinners & of that great salvation purchased by the death of Jesus Christ. The schools are kept in regular order and diligently attended. The whole number of inhabitants 286. The congregation consists of 179.

The three settlements in Labrador contain about 700 inhabitants among whom are 16 missionaries. The christian Esquimaux grow in grace, the schools are all well attended. An edition of the Acts of the Apostles has been printed by the British & Foreign Bible Society. Two of the missionaries, one of whom had ministered in Labrador for more than thirty years appeared at a meeting of the Committee of the

British & foreign missionary Society, in the costumes of the natives and expressed the thanks of the Esquimaux for what the Society had done in their behalf.

"This portion of the New Testament in the Esquimaux language" says one of the missionaries, afford us much joy & encouragement; nor do we entertain a doubt but that our Esquimaux also will receive the most beneficial impressions when they shall read the beautiful description of the origin of the christian church & feel their hearts warmed with fresh motives to gratitude".

The Brethren had three flourishing settlements on the river Muskingum, but during the revolutionary war these places were destroyed. Fairfield in Canada was built by such of the indian converts as were again collected by the Missionaries. In 1798 some were sent to occupy the land belonging to their former settlements on the Muskingum which they now do, and their missionary labours prosper. The greater part however remains at Fairfield ~~till 1813~~, entertaining hopes that the Gospel might yet find entrance

among the wild Chippeway Tribes inhabiting those parts.

This settlement in 1813 the American Army under General Harrison destroyed by fire and the congregation was dispersed. By the last accounts, the members were again collected to the number of 109 indian brethren & sisters, who reside in huts where Fairfield formerly stood. A new chapel has been built, and a place of residence selected in a more convenient spot which has received the name of New Fairfield.

This is all the information that I have been able to obtain with regard to their Missions in the Northern parts of North America. I shall now feel myself at liberty to consider some other part of their missions or my story will be quite too short.

That of the west Indies is well worthy our attention. This commenced in the year 1732. A baptized negro reflecting on the forlorn state of a sister of his, who was a pagan slave in St Thomas, communicated his feelings to others. Similar impressions were soon realized by

many and one of them solicited to be a companion with him on a mission to the island. Having implored the direction and blessing of Heaven they came to the determination to make known to the brethren that they felt constrained to go to the poor negroes of St Thomas & make known to them especially to her who was sister to one of them a Saviour's love. They further resolved that if there were no other way to effect their object, they would sell themselves for slaves. After some time spent in deliberation, the society commending them to God, they departed with joyful hearts.

Much they suffered and much they accomplished. They have now seven stations in what is call the Danish West Indies in which are more than 12,000 negroes under the care of the Missionaries.

A mission was begun at Gracehill in Antigua 1756. In a letter dated 1813 are the following remarks; "As I sat in my room, having a good view of the roads leading from different plantations, I could see the people running in companies at various

distance; & as it occurs with persons when they are in eager haste after any thing from which they expect much pleasure, one may see the bent of the mind in the attitude of the body, so it was here. They took every short cut, the young and stout leaping before the lame & infirm and the latter pressing on with all their might, stretching their heads & arms forward, every effort bespeaking the eagerness of their very souls, to be present at a place where they might hear the marvellous history of Jesus the son of God who gave himself a sacrifice for sinners. As I went towards the chapel I beheld still many coming at a distance. The chapel was soon filled & the last comers had to stand before the doors & windows. When I began to read the most eager attention was visible in every countenance. It was indeed an hour of blessing for both speaker & hearers. I stood afterwards at my door to see how the people returned to their homes, & was much affected by the devout manner in which they separated.

In the evening the chapel was again crowded & when at the words "he bowed his head & gave up the ghost" the congregation fell on their knees & some wept aloud.

In the education of youth much attention is given and much success realized.
The number that belong to these several congregations on this island are about 12,000.

In 1754. three missionary stations were established in Jamaica. These stations contain about 400 baptised negroes. One of the missionaries thus writes, "I may truely say that the Lord blesses our feeble labours to make known his name to the heathen.

In 1765 a mission was begun at Barbadoes, and at St Christophers about the same time. The former contains about 200 the latter 2000 baptised negroes. In a letter from Barbadoes the writer remarks; I assure you I have frequently conversed with some of our negroes concerning the state of their souls when they have spoken as freely and as experimentally of the Lord's dealing with

them, & their desire to live for him in this world, as I have ever heard the most truly converted persons do in Europe, & their life & conversation prove that it was not mere talk."

We pass from this to notice their mission to the Cape of Good Hope among the Hottentots. It was begun in 1736 by George Schmidt a man of unconquerable zeal and invincible fortitude. By his persevering labours, though among a people scarcely above animal nature, he soon gathered a congregation to the Lord. But this mission after a beginning so prosperous was abandoned, but renewed fifty years afterwards. There are two settlements and recently a lot has been purchased for a third. A school was established in 1814 on the plan of Dr Bell and Mr Lancaster, which is very promising. In the two congregations in 1816 the number was 1600.

We find them also in South America, among the slaves and free negroes, scattered over the extensive region of Guiana enjoying almost uninterrupted peace and success, notwithstanding the remark often made, that it is im-

practicable to carry the gospels even to any part of South America on account of the barbarous habits of the natives. The mission here commenced in 1738. At the close of 1815 the congregation in the first settlement of Guiana consisted of 713 of whom 533 were communicants.

In 1765 the Brethren penetrated into Russian Asia and on the river Wolga built Sarepta in order to introduce the gospels to the Calmuck Tartars. Here they exhibited a degree of patience worthy of his cause under whose banner they had enlisted. The number and variety of the Calmuck deities are almost beyond computation. So tenacious are they of their ceremonies particularly in in shaving their whiskers which constitutes a part of their religion that they swore a long and bloody war with the Persians calling them infidels for no other reason, than because they would not give their whiskers their peculiar shape. This mission was for a long time suspended but is now reviving. Two missionaries are now among them having learnt their language they are beginning to preach to them the gospels.

The whole number of Moravian missionary establishments in pagan lands is 33: Missionaries 170 under whose care we may safely reckon 60,000 souls.

"When one looks at the number and greatness of their achievement," says a late elegant writer, "when he thinks of the greatness of the change they have made on materials so coarse & so unpromising - when he eyes the villages - and around the whole of that engaging perspective by which they have chequered & relieved the grim solitude of the desert, he untunes the lute and listens to the praise of reclaimed savages; who would not long to be in possession of the charm by which they have wrought this wondrous transformation - who would not willingly exchange for it, all the parade of human eloquence, and all the confidence of human argument - and for the wisdom of winning souls, who is there that would not rejoice to throw away from him the loudness of the song & all the insignificancy of its passing fascinations."

Were all protestant christendom to feel and act equally with the Moravians in the great work of renovating the world

every idol of the heathen would soon be swept away, and temples to the living God every where seen, — the earth would be one vast altar, and the sky one magnificent temple of Jehovah, perfumed with incense offered up by the great congregation of man.

From the Moravian Missions a voice is heard — a voice not the charm of words, but what is more impressive, of example and action — a voice as unassuming as the nature of the message it bears, is mild; and as unpretending as the name for whom it pleads is glorious — a voice which seems to invite angels to bend from their celestial abodes as if to wait the event, while it proclaims to every christian, awake! come! come with us to the work of the Lord, come and by the arm of Jehovah every idol shall be banish from the earth, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ universally prevail.

"Then shall his saints exult with joy divine,
Their virtues quicken, & their lives refine

Their souls in prone, their songs more grateful rise
And sweeter incense cheer the morning skies;
And the wide world resound in wondering strains
"Supreme o'er heaven & earth Jehovah reigns."